

25X1A

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MEMORANDUM FOR : The Special Group

SUBJECT : Proposal for Augmentation of TACKLE Assets to
Meet Far Eastern Requirements

25X1C 1. The Special Group on 17 January approved a mission from the base at ☐ permitting transit of southern Laos going and returning. This mission primarily directed at North Vietnam was thus devised in order to obtain coverage of targets in southern Laos and also to test the air defense reaction which such a maneuver might provoke. It was the thought of the Special Group that further U-2 coverage of Laos would be dependent upon the extent of the reaction.

2. It now appears most unlikely in the near future that the weather in southern Laos and the weather in southern North Vietnam will be adequate for photography simultaneously, the former having been clear recently and predicted to be relatively clear in the near future.

3. COMOR has recently reaffirmed the need for coverage of Laos and on Thursday of this week will consider a proposal for coverage of Laos more comprehensive than that now intended by the mission noted above.

4. Bearing upon these developments are the following factors:

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a. The need to have a second plane at [] to backstop 25X1C
the now approved [] staging (against the missile test
range, Pao-Tou and Lan-Chou) in the event that the weather should
break simultaneously to permit the approved mission over the
Szechwan Basin.

b. The need for returning Article 342 at [] for 25X1C
IRAN.

5. In this situation, the following alternatives have been considered:

a. To execute the present approved mission to North
Vietnam transiting Laos when the weather is good in Laos even
though not favorable in North Vietnam with a third transit en route
to [] or

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b. To use the plane at [] to obtain complete
coverage of Laos without testing air defense reaction as the Special
Group had first intended.

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c. To ferry Article 342 now at [] directly to 25X1C
[] covering such targets in southern Laos and North Vietnam
as might be possible (little coverage could be expected because of
the directness of the route and the variable of weather) and hold
the plane at [] to cover the Szechwan Basin if the weather broke
simultaneously with the [] mission.

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25X1C 6. In considering the foregoing alternatives, account should be taken
of our intention to return the unit at [] to the States for regrouping,
it having been in place since 19 November 1962. It is our preference that if
25X1C this were done Article 358 now in standby for SAC use against Cuba would be
dispatched to [] as a second plane to support our operations in the Far
East, including coverage of North Vietnam and Laos as such coverage became
necessary and approved. This would leave one aircraft available for SAC
standby against possible Cuba requirements. A second standby aircraft
would then be available at the end of March as it finishes factory conversion.

25X1C 7. Taking into account the need for IRAN and the limited flight time
remaining on Article 342 at [] we have concluded that it is impera-
25X1C tive to immediately forward the SAC-held aircraft to [] quite apart from
the decision that is made on the coverage of Laos. The importance of the Far
Eastern targets, including Communist China, North Vietnam, and Laos,
warrants that we provide more support to permit prudent operations than are
now within our capability.

8. Recommendation: It is recommended that approval be granted for
the following actions:

25X1A a. The immediate movement of Article 358 (now held for
SAC) to [] a second aircraft for [] having earlier been 25X1A

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approved by the Special Group.

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b. That Article 342 now at [] be ferried to [] 25X1C

covering Laos and North Vietnam targets in the manner noted in

Paragraph 5. a. and held as a backup for the Szechwan mission in

the event that the weather cleared in that area simultaneously with

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the [] staging. (The [] has informally concurred 25X1C

in this proposal with the understanding that this would be a temporary
expedient.)

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
for Deputy Director
(Research)

cc: DCI
DDCI
ER
NRO
DD/R
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**Paper suspended by Mr. McCone and not taken up
at Special Group.**

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